THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN FACILITATING DISTANCE

LEARNERS EDUCATION: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

It is believed that some of the indispensable supporting system persuading the superiority of the programmes offered in distance education is the stipulation of information systems services of the library to its chief stakeholders. Many of the researches in distance education are in harmony that any library and information support is a key in aspect of any educational system. Research is making an escalating significance in distance education universities. It is very much appropriate for any researcher in the field of library and information science to reconsider how a library or a library professional can play a most significant role in facilitating distance education in a country like India, where as the conventional on campus learner simply depend on the physical library. The aim of this research study was to examine the role of libraries by the distance education learners. A well administered questionnaire based survey was used to gather information from 1445 distance education students of Directorate of Correspondence Courses (DCC) and Distance Education (DE), Bangalore University. The findings shows that 44.20% of the distance students are partially satisfied with the resources and services provided by the University library, with the suggestion that they need exclusive library resources and services, and that the library could be more assertive and proactive in providing assistance. Interestingly, distance students expressed, they would be eager to pay a higher library membership fee if the library could extend them more services. 55.8% of the distance students opined the importance of the University library followed by 45.4% of the students responded with the public library importance giving 8.7%, a very less preference to college libraries. 74.30% of the distance students opined that the library has a good, very good and excellent role to be played in their learning experience. Majority of the students gave the positive opinion regarding the role of the libraries in meeting their information needs. This opens up stimulating potentiality for augmented services.

KEYWORDS: Role of Library, University Library Services, Distance Learners, Distance Education, Importance of Library & Library Use

Original Article

INTRODUCTION

Distance learning is the system of instruction delivery that occurs when the educator and the student are not actually sharing the same space at the same time. Distance education can be generally defined as education provided to the educands without their attending normal classes in the institutions organizing it and without their being in uninterrupted contact with teachers. Until recently, it took almost solely the form of correspondence education. The distance students are sent lessons prepared by experts in different fields for them to read and understand each subject. Occasional contact classes are held in different places which give a prospect for students to meet teachers and interact with them during that contact clases.

Distance education is defined by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology as: Institution-based, formal education where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources and instructors.

Distance education is essentially self education for which library support is indispensable. Even in formal education library is important but in distance education it is even more so.

Nowadays education is becoming a lifelong process. Teaching and learning are no longer limited to the four wall classroom. Distance education has been in existence for more than a decade. Until recently, most of the people considered distance education as alternative and a marginal function, and the actual distance between students and the teachers, provided teaching and learning not only incompetent but also ineffective. The development in the ICT's networks has decreased the barriers of geographical distance and other intrinsic shortcomings associated with this mode of education. Distance education has made significant development over the recent decades and has now expanded extensively accepting as a feasible substitute delivery system and alternative to the conventional educational system. In addition to this, the use of ICT's is offering this system a cutting edge over the conventional learning system. Information and communication technology can be used both for instruction and document delivery and libraries play an imperative role in this framework. The swift spreading out of ICT, information literacy and access to the internet offers enormous opportunities for distance learning.

It is widely accepted that Distance education is one of the fastest growing drift in higher education. It is often described as the ''formalized learning happening when the student is geographically located outside the university-campus. Both the teacher and learner are expected to have nominal physical contact and interaction, but much dependence is on electronic communications'' (Mabawonku, 2004). Distance education has made remarkable progress over the last two decades and has now gained widespread acceptance as a feasible alternative learning delivery system (Rao, 2006). Distance education has had effect not only on the discipline of education, but it has also basically overstated services that support it (Watson, 2006). One of the most essential support systems influencing the quality of the courses offered in distance education is the provision of library and information services and resources. Most researchers in distance learning are in agreement that library services and support is a key in element in its system (Copers et al., 2001).

The Distance Eduction Universities offering various facilities for distance learners cannot shy away from the responsibility for offering the essential library services on the appeal that is the most important responsibility of the students to educate and be literate among thermsleves in the context of information literacy with the help of whatever facilities they have given. The Universities concerned have more chance in ensuring the quality standard by providing everything possible facilities to make the infrastructure strong enough for sustaining its distance learning programmes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

We believe in that library is the heart and hub of the university, the use of the library is not incorporated into distance learning courses (Lebowitz, 1997). It is known from the literature that it they are gradually discussing library services for distance students, but this discussion appears primarily in library literature (Lebowitz, 1997).

Tipton (2001) also reported in his survey that to evaluate library support services for distance learning within the Texas A & M university system. The study revealed that distance students were not utilizing library resources and services to their full Potential.

In a survey conducted by Dew (2001) at the University of Iowa, on their off-campus students. In his survey, students were asked to rank various library services based on their importance. The following services were ranked highest: web and/or email reference, 71.3 percent, remote access to full-text databases, 65.1 percent, home delivery of books and articles, 60.7 percent. Guides to doing library research were ranked tenth with only 30.9 percent. The survey revealed that reference services, electronic services, and document delivery were ranked high, while user education services were ranked the lowest (Dew, 2001).

In a study on library use by distance learners in three Nigerian universities by Mabawonku (2004), it was established that many of the distance students attributed their minimal use of the library to their tight schedules which were fully engaged with lectures and interactions with lecturers. This may affect their library habits and consequently their optimal use of the library.

Rowland and Rubbert (2001) conducted a study on the information needs and practices of distance education students in the UK showed that the university libraries included in their sample ''often did not cater for the specific needs of part-time and distance learners, which leads to an increasing use of the internet as a substitute for traditional information channels.'' Books and journals were found to be the information sources most frequently used. The study also revealed that part-time students were making use of electronic information sources increasingly as only 12 percent of the respondents did not have internet access at home (Rowland and Rubbert, 2001).

The Sectional Committee of the Indian Library Association on Distance Education (2001) has specified that "institutes offering distance education are also held responsible for providing services to the distance learners. Conventional library services in no way can be stretched to meet the information demands of distance learners as they face distinct and different challenges involving library access and information delivery. We have to find new ways and means to provide access to information to this highly dynamic and ever increasing community of users." The Indian library Association also thereby emphasizes the same philosophy of providing equitable library services for distance learners.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

A study was carried out to determine the role of library support systems to distance education students of Bangalore University. With the outcome of the study, library may have plans to develop those information services and resources most needed. The study also gives a broad picture of distance student's gender, age, education status, and identifies challenges and barriers encountered by students in finding, obtaining, and using information to support their studies.

The main objectives of the study is

- To investigate the frequency of Library Use by Distance Education Students

- To examine the Time Spent in the Library in Seeking Information during the Visit

- To investigate the Use of Library Information Sources and Services

- To understand the role of the libraries in meeting information needs of distance learners

- To identify the satisfaction level towards University library

To address the question of the role of libraries on distance education students in facilitating their education, a questionnaire based survey was conducted. The questionnaire was distributed through stratified random sampling to 1550 distance education students at different study centre's and University post graduate departments. A total of 1445 students returned the completely filled questionnaire giving a return rate of 93.22%. Data analysis was accomplished using SPSS.

This descriptive statistics procedure was adopted which provides us summary statistics for variables employed in the study. The researcher has taken up a cluster of students belonging to different courses to be examined. Descriptive statistics has been used to assess the outcome of the research. And in this study frequencies and percentage descriptive statistics have been employed. The researcher has carried out the Chi-Square test in terms of frequencies. Chi-Square Test (x) is a compute of discrepancy between probable and observed frequencies.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework adopt for this study is the Guidelines for Library Services to Distance Learners developed by Indian Library Association (2001). It stresses on the effective use of the library resources and the development of information literacy programmes which could play a vital role in distance student learning. The institutions offering distance education should consider and provide ample opportunities to library and information services. The main objective of these is to make sure the provision of impartial library services to distance learners.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Distance Education Students Gender Wise Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	829	57.40%
Female	616	42.60%
Total	**1445**	**100%**

Table 1.1: Demographic Profile of the Distance Education Students –
Gender Wise Distribution against Aourse and Area

Variables			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Education Status	UG (B.A, B.Com & B.B.M)	F	309	261	570
		%	37.3%	42.4%	39.4%
	PG (M.A, M.Sc, M.Com)	F	520	355	875
		%	62.7%	57.6%	60.6%
Area	Urban	F	678	488	1166
		%	81.8%	79.2%	80.7%
	Rural	F	151	128	279
		%	18.2%	20.8%	19.3%

It is found from the Table 1 and 1.1 that of the 1445 students, 829 (57.4%) were male and 616 (42.6%) were female. The students consisted of undergraduate and postgraduate departments studying in the Arts, Commerce and Management stream, with the largest number 875 (60.6%) coming from post graduate department. A total of 875 students (60.6%) were studying at the Masters level, while the remaining (39.4%) were in their undergraduate programs and aslo indicates the distribution of populations in urban and rural areas. The results of the survey showed that 1166 (80.7%) of the respondents lived in the urban areas out of which 678 were males and 488 were females, while 279 (19.3%) were resided

in the rural areas representing 151 males and 128 females of the study group.

Table 2: Frequency & Percentage Response of Library use by Distance Education Students

Type of Library		Occasionally	During Contact Classes	Weekly	Monthly	Fortnightly	Total
University Library	Frequency	634	133	282	358	38	1445
	Percent	43.9%	9.2%	19.5%	24.8%	2.6%	100.0%
Public Library	Frequency	786	297	243	90	29	1445
	Percent	54.4%	20.6%	16.8%	6.2%	2.0%	100.0%
College Library	Frequency	1309	94	34	8	0	1445
	Percent	90.6%	6.5%	2.4%	0.6%	0.0%	100.0%

It is clear from the Table 2 that, all the respondents of the study do not have the habit of using the library. Among them, about 43.9% of the respondents visit the university library ocassionally, 9.2% during their contact classes, 19.5% weekly, and 24.8% monthly, and 2.6% fortnightly, 54.4% of the respondents used the public library ocassionally, followed by 20.6% during the contact classes, 16.8% weekly 6.2% monthly and about 2% fortnightly and 90.6% of the students ocassionally used the nearby college libraries, 6.5% of respondents visit the college library during their contact classes, 2.4% visited weekly and a negligible number 0.6% of the respondents visited monthly.

Table 2.1: Frequency and Percentage Responses of College Library use in Meeting Information Needs by Gender, Area and Educational Qualification and Results of Test Statistics

Responses		Gender		Area		Course		Total
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
During Contact Classes	F	350	284	507	127	569	65	634
	%	42.20%	46.10%	43.50%	45.50%	99.80%	7.40%	43.90%
Occasionally	F	74	59	106	27	0	133	133
	%	8.90%	9.60%	9.10%	9.70%	0.00%	15.20%	9.20%
Weekly	F	180	102	226	56	0	282	282
	%	21.70%	16.60%	19.40%	20.10%	0.00%	32.20%	19.50%
During Contact Classes	F	225	133	295	63	1	357	358
	%	27.10%	21.60%	25.30%	22.60%	0.20%	40.80%	24.80%
Fortnightly	F	0	38	32	6	0	38	38
	%	0.00%	6.20%	2.70%	2.20%	0.00%	4.30%	2.60%
Total	F	829	616	1166	279	570	875	1445
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Test Statistics		CV=.207 ; p=.000		CV=.030; p=.857		CV=.910 ; p=.000		X^2=730.699; p=.000

Note: CV=Cramer's V; p=probability; F=Frequency; %=Percent

Further to the above here in the Table 2.1 frequency of use of college library is verified. We find that on the whole majority of the respondents indicated during contact classes for college library visits (about 43.90%) and occasionally (about 9.2%) and next highest being accessed monthly (about 24.8%) and only a meager 2.6% access university library on fortnightly basis. Chi-square test revealed a significance of the study with value (X^2=730.699; p=.000), further conforming that the frequent college library visit is not on a very higher. Further, associations between the responses and gender, area and course revealed that course has significant associations (CV=.910; p=.000) and gender also has significant associations (CV=.207; p-000), where we find that UG students indicated during contact classes (about 99.8%) which means UG students do access the near by college library to the maximum extent, and PG students indicated (about 7.4%) would access the college library. Here we can observe that since most of the UG students are at college levels their need and effort to access college library is very much needed compared to PG students who in most of the cases directly enroll to

universities. Though there is significant association in gender both the genders have shown similar pattern and no specific change is observed. There are no significant associations observed for responses and area, indicating that the pattern of responses is statistically same.

Table 2.2: Frequency and Percentage Responses of University Library use in Meeting Information Needs by Gender, Area and Educational Qualification and Results of Test Statistics

Responses		Gender		Area		Course		Total
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
During Contact Classes	F	423	363	634	152	401	385	786
	%	51.00%	58.90%	54.40%	54.50%	70.40%	44.00%	54.40%
Ocassionally	F	192	105	248	49	137	160	297
	%	23.20%	17.00%	21.30%	17.60%	24.00%	18.30%	20.60%
Weekly	F	143	100	192	51	23	220	243
	%	17.20%	16.20%	16.50%	18.30%	4.00%	25.10%	16.80%
Monthly	F	51	39	72	18	8	82	90
	%	6.20%	6.30%	6.20%	6.50%	1.40%	9.40%	6.20%
Fortnightly	F	20	9	20	9	1	28	29
	%	2.40%	1.50%	1.70%	3.20%	0.20%	3.20%	2.00%
Total	F	829	616	1166	279	570	875	1445
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Test Statistics		CV=.092 ; p=.015		CV=.056; p=.339		CV=.364 ; p=.000		X^2=1233.183; p=.000

Note: CV=Cramer's V; p=probability; F=Frequency; %=Percent

Similar to the previous study above here in this Table 2.2 frequency of University library visit is verified. It is found that on the whole majority of the respondents indicated during contact classes for university library visits (about 54.4%) and occasionally (about 20.6%) and next highest being accessed weekly (about 16.8%) and only a small percentage access of monthly visists and daily (about 6.2% and 2% respectively). Chi-square test reveals a significance of the study with value (X^2=1233.183; p=.000), further conforming that the use is not on a very higher side for university library. Further, associations between the responses and gender, area and course revealed that course has significant associations (CV=.364; p=.000) and gender also has significant associations (CV=.092; p=.015), where we find that UG students indicated occasionally and during contact clases (about 94.4%) which means UG students do access university library, and PG students indicated would access university library on a weekly basis (about 25.10%). Similar to the previous table here again though there is significant association in gender both the genders have shown similar pattern and no specific change is observed. There are no significant associations observed for responses and area, indicating that the pattern of responses is statistically same.

Table 2.3: Frequency and Percentage Responses of Public Library Use in Meeting Information by Gender, Area and Educational Qualification and Results of Test Statistics

Responses		Gender		Area		Course		Total
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
During Contact Classes	F	747	562	1054	255	508	801	1309
	%	90.10%	91.20%	90.40%	91.40%	89.10%	91.50%	90.60%
Ocassionally	F	57	37	76	18	40	54	94
	%	6.90%	6.00%	6.50%	6.50%	7.00%	6.20%	6.50%
Weekly	F	21	13	28	6	20	14	34
	%	2.50%	2.10%	2.40%	2.20%	3.50%	1.60%	2.40%
Monthly	F	4	4	8	0	2	6	8
	%	0.50%	0.60%	0.70%	0.00%	0.40%	0.70%	0.60%
Total	F	829	616	1166	279	570	875	1445
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Test Statistics		CV=.025 ; p=.824		CV=.037; p=.572		CV=.068 ; p=.084		X^2= 3326.037; p=.000

Note: CV=Cramer's V; p=probability; F=Frequency; %=Percent

Comprising the immediate two previous tables here in this Table 2.3 frequency of public library use is verified. It is found that on the whole majority of the respondents indicated during contact classes for public library visits (about 90.60%) and occasionally (about 6.5%) and next being accessed weekly (about 2.4%) and negligible monthly visit (0.60%). Though Chi-square test reveals significance of the study with value (X^2=3326.037; p=.000), confirms that the visit and use is on a very high for public library during contact classes. Further, associations between the responses and gender, area and course revealed there are no significant associations observed for responses and area, indicating that the pattern of responses is statistically same.

Table 3.1: Frequency and Percentage Responses of Time Spent in the University Library by Gender, Area and Educational Qualification and Results of Test Statistics

Responses		Gender		Area		Course		Total
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
0-1 hrs	F	442	367	645	164	373	436	809
	%	53.30%	59.60%	55.30%	58.80%	65.40%	49.80%	56.00%
1-2 hrs	F	261	168	344	85	66	363	429
	%	31.50%	27.30%	29.50%	30.50%	11.60%	41.50%	29.70%
2-3 hrs	F	112	64	155	21	121	55	176
	%	13.50%	10.40%	13.30%	7.50%	21.20%	6.30%	12.20%
3-4 hrs	F	14	17	22	9	10	21	31
	%	1.70%	2.80%	1.90%	3.20%	1.80%	2.40%	2.10%
Total	F	829	616	1166	279	570	875	1445
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Test Statistics		CV=.080 ; p=.026		CV=.077; p=.035		CV=.356 ; p=.000		X^2=964.575; p=.000

Note: CV=Cramer's V; p=probability; F=Frequency; %=Percent

In the above Table 3.1 time spent in the library at university library is verified. We find that more than half of the respondents indicated 0-1 hrs for time spent in university library(about 56%), 1 – 2 hours is the next highest (about 29.70%), 2-3 hours being spent shown by some respondents(about 12.20%) and a very small (2.10%) percent of the respondents shown 3-4 hours being spent for university library. Chi-square test revealed a significance of the study with value (X^2=964.575; p=.000), further conforming that the time spent in the university library is on lower side. Further, associations between the responses and gender, area and course revealed that all of them gender, area and course have significant associations (CV=.080; p=.026, CV=.077; p=.035 and CV=.365; p=.000 respectively). It can be observed that

PG students spend more time in the university library compared to UG students. Both gender and area of the students exhibit a similar pattern and no specific highlights being observed indicating that the pattern of responses is statistically same.

Table 3.2: Frequency and Percentage Responses of Time Spent in the Public Library by Gender, Area and Educational Qualification and Results of Test Statistics

Responses		Gender		Area		Course		Total
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
0-1 hrs	F	423	363	634	152	401	385	786
	%	51.00%	58.90%	54.40%	54.50%	70.40%	44.00%	54.40%
1-2 hrs	F	238	134	299	73	123	249	372
	%	28.70%	21.80%	25.60%	26.20%	21.60%	28.50%	25.70%
2-3 hrs	F	162	111	221	52	43	230	273
	%	19.50%	18.00%	19.00%	18.60%	7.50%	26.30%	18.90%
3-4 hrs	F	6	8	12	2	3	11	14
	%	0.70%	1.30%	1.00%	0.70%	0.50%	1.30%	1.00%
Total	F	829	616	1166	279	570	875	1445
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Test Statistics		CV=.092 ; p=.006		CV=.013; p=.967		CV=.284 ; p=.000		X^2=855.083; p=.000

Note: CV=Cramer's V; p=probability; F=Frequency; %=Percent

The above Table 3.2 is to study time spent in the library being verified for public library. Here again we find more than half of the respondents indicated 0-1 hours for time spent in public library (54.4%), 1–2 hours is the next highest (about 25.70%), 2-3 hours being spent shown by some respondents (18.90%) and a only 1% percent of the respondents shown 3-4 hours being spent for public library. The study is revealed significant with Chi-square test value (X^2=855.083; p=.000) further conforming that the time spent in public library is on lower side. Associations between the responses and gender, area and course revealed that gender and course are showing significant associations (CV=.284; p=.000 and CV=.092; p=.006 respectively). Here again it is observed that PG students spend more time in the public library compared to UG students, gender exhibit a similar pattern and no specific highlights being observed and there is no significant association being observed for area of the students indicating that the pattern of responses is statistically same.

Table 3.3: Frequency and Percent Responses of Time Spent in College Library by Gender, Area and Educational Qualification and Results of Test Statistics

Responses		Gender		Area		Course		Total
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Never Used	F	747	564	1056	255	510	801	1311
	%	90.10%	91.60%	90.60%	91.40%	89.50%	91.50%	90.70%
0-1 hrs	F	69	39	91	17	51	57	108
	%	8.30%	6.30%	7.80%	6.10%	8.90%	6.50%	7.50%
1-2 hrs	F	13	13	19	7	9	17	26
	%	1.60%	2.10%	1.60%	2.50%	1.60%	1.90%	1.80%
Total	F	829	616	1166	279	570	875	1445
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Test Statistics		CV=.042 ; p=.281		CV=.036; p=.393		CV=.047 ; p=.207		X^2=2148.898; p=.000

Note: CV=Cramer's V; p=probability; F=Frequency; %=Percent

Similar to the immediate above two tables in this Table 3.3 a study of time spent in the library is being verified for college library. It is very interesting to see that most of the respondents indicated never for time spent in college library

(about 90.70%), and a minimum of (7.5%) used it for about 0-1 hours, and a very lowest of (1.8%) used it for about 1-2 hours. The Chi-square test value (X^2=2148.898; p=.000) shown high significance of study with respect to college library and further conforming that no students spend any time in the college library. Associations between the responses and gender, area and course revealed no significant associations at all indicating that the pattern of responses is statistically same.

Table 4: Use of Library Information Sources

Information Sources		Not Used	Rarely Used	Occasionally Used	Frequently Used	Highly Used	Total
Books	Frequency	0	10	181	727	527	1445
	Percent	0.00%	0.70%	12.50%	50.30%	36.50%	100.00%
Journals	Frequency	201	746	380	108	10	1445
	Percent	13.90%	51.60%	26.30%	7.50%	0.70%	100.00%
Newspapers and Magazines	Frequency	0	37	638	513	257	1445
	Percent	0.00%	2.60%	44.20%	35.50%	17.80%	100.00%
E-books and e-journals	Frequency	190	1010	181	34	30	1445
	Percent	13.10%	69.90%	12.50%	2.40%	2.10%	100.00%
Thesis/Dissertations/ Reports	Frequency	1227	171	47	0	0	1445
	Percent	84.90%	11.80%	3.30%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Reference Books	Frequency	87	319	234	742	63	1445
	Percent	6.00%	22.10%	16.20%	51.30%	4.40%	100.00%

The most crucial factor influencing distance education learners is the Book. Majority of the distance students seek information from the books. About 86% of the students frequently and highly used the books for their academic purpose then from reference books (55.7%) related to their subject. Newspapers and magazines (44.2%) were occasionally used as a reference source, journals are also an occasionally preferred source of information (26.3%). E-books and e-journals (69.9%) was another source of information which was rarely used by them, while many of the students didn't have an idea of thesis/dissertations/reports.

Table 5: Use of Library Services

Library Services		Highly Used	Frequently Used	Occasionally Used	Rarely Used	Never Used	Total
Photocopying Services	Frequency	591	524	207	70	53	1445
	Percent	40.9%	36.3%	14.3%	4.8%	3.7%	100.0%
Periodicals service	Frequency	548	351	385	135	26	1445
	Percent	37.9%	24.3%	26.6%	9.3%	1.8%	100.0%
Internet Service	Frequency	519	333	427	109	57	1445
	Percent	35.9%	23.0%	29.6%	7.5%	3.9%	100.0%
Current Awareness Service	Frequency	657	310	411	46	21	1445
	Percent	45.5%	21.5%	28.4%	3.2%	1.5%	100.0%
Reference Service	Frequency	1142	235	45	10	13	1445
	Percent	79.0%	16.3%	3.1%	0.7%	0.9%	100.0%

Most of the students (95.3%) frequently and highly used the reference services of the university library followed by (77.2%) used the library for photocopying the materials. Current awareness service (67%) was another service which was highly and frequently used. 62.2% of the students used the periodicals services followed by the (58.9%) internet service.

Table 6: Frequency and Percent Responses of Satisfaction Towards University Library by Gender, Area and Educational Qualification and Results of Test Statistics

Responses		Gender		Area		Course		Total
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Undecided	F	191	123	261	53	117	197	314
	%	23.00%	20.00%	22.40%	19.00%	20.50%	22.50%	21.70%
Dissatisfied	F	119	73	162	30	87	105	192
	%	14.40%	11.90%	13.90%	10.80%	15.30%	12.00%	13.30%
Partially Satisfied	F	355	284	507	132	265	374	639
	%	42.80%	46.10%	43.50%	47.30%	46.50%	42.70%	44.20%
Satisfied	F	87	78	123	42	61	104	165
	%	10.50%	12.70%	10.50%	15.10%	10.70%	11.90%	11.40%
Very Satisfied		77	58	113	22	40	95	135
		9.30%	9.40%	9.70%	7.90%	7.00%	10.90%	9.30%
Total	F	829	616	1166	279	570	875	1445
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Test Statistics		CV=.062 ; p=.238		CV=.076; p=.078		CV=.085; p=.035		X^2=593.862; p=.000

Note: CV=Cramer's V; p=probability; F=Frequency; %=Percent

Satisfaction towards university library resources and its services is verified in the above table 6; The satisfaction level going from partial towards satisfied showing a positive trend (about 64.90%) the Chi-square test with value (X^2=593.862; p=.000) shows the study is significant and confirms that there is a good satisfaction level towards university library. Further associations between the responses with gender, area and course revealed that course alone has significance of associations (at CV=.085; p=.035) and at this CV value for course the association is very weak and not generally acceptable.

Table 7: Frequency and Percentage Responses of Library Role in Meeting Information Needs by Gender, Area and Educational Qualification and Results of Test Statistics

Responses		Gender		Area		Course		Total
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural	UG	PG	
Poor	F	23	25	35	13	27	21	48
	%	2.80%	4.10%	3.00%	4.70%	4.70%	2.40%	3.30%
Fair	F	196	127	260	63	156	167	323
	%	23.60%	20.60%	22.30%	22.60%	27.40%	19.10%	22.40%
Good	F	322	261	472	111	288	295	583
	%	38.80%	42.40%	40.50%	39.80%	50.50%	33.70%	40.30%
Very Good	F	198	140	274	64	57	281	338
	%	23.90%	22.70%	23.50%	22.90%	10.00%	32.10%	23.40%
Excellent	F	90	63	125	28	42	111	153
	%	10.90%	10.20%	10.70%	10.00%	7.40%	12.70%	10.60%
Total	F	829	616	1166	279	570	875	1445
	%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Test Statistics		CV=.057 ; p=.328		CV=.037; p=.731		CV=.290 ; p=.000		X^2=576.367; p=.000

Note: CV=Cramer's V; p=probability; F=Frequency; %=Percent

As far as role of library in meeting the information needs by gender, area and course are verified as in the above Table 7; we find that on the whole majority of the respondents indicated the need is from good to very good to excellent (to an extent of 74.3%) compared to respondents indicating fair and poor (about 25.7%). Chi-square test revealed a significant value (X^2=576.367; p=.000), further conforming that the role of libraries is on the higher extent in meeting the

information needs. Further, associations between the responses and gender, area and course revealed that course has significant associations (CV=.290; p=.000), where we find that UG students indicated more of good to poor responses (about 82.6%), and PG students indicated more of good to excellent (about 78.5%). In other words, PG students stressed more importance of role played by the libraries in meeting information needs compared to UG students. However, no significant associations were observed for responses and area and gender, indicating that the pattern of responses is statistically same.

Majority of the respondents fall in the age group between 20-30 years of age. Most of the distance students do not have the habit of visiting the library frequently, they occasionally used the libraries or they visited when there is a need for information and some of them visited during their contact classes. But they showed the character of interest in going to the library while seeking information irrespective of the type of library whether it is a university library or a public library and even a college library. Many of the students visited the libraries between 0-1 hour.

Course of study was a factor for majority of the respondents while seeking information. Majority of the respondents during the course of education preferred consulting books as a chief information source and then reference books. Most of the respondents used the reference services offered by the library followed by the photocopying service.

Problems of Accessing Resources

The students who had used library were asked about any barriers they may have experienced in accessing/finding information resources. Findings show that the main problem of the respondents was not finding a library with relevant, good quality information. Location of the library, absence of information literacy programme, library timings and no time for searching information was another main problem. This shows all the problems that respondents expressed in accessing information resources. No information services were designed to support Distance Learners, this was the major problem encountered by distance learners.

Implications for the Distance Education Institutions

Undoubtedly it is the responsibility of the distance education institutions to provide the information services to its chief stakeholder's ideed it helps in the quality of distance learners.

Generally distance learners asre geographically seperated by time and space with uneven knowledge penetration, the challenge lies in any libraries and distance students by means of suitable information technology tool which appears exceptionally available and extravagant. This is why previous studies by Whitehair (2010) and Hensley & Miller (2010) have recommended that the awareness of library professionals that separation is a significant challenge for any distance learners which is acceptable and approach to overcome these are very much desirable in the current situation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Libraries have a key role in distance education programmes. Many University and public libraries, especially in the country like India, serve as information resource centre for distance courses. Academic libraries are critical to the development of distance education.

The study has revealed that most of the distance students surveyed do not use library facilities to the utmost level inorder to satisfy their needs. The findings of the study showes that a modest proportion of the respondents using the library services and its resources were mainly for academic purpose. Lack of information searching skills also limited the

use of information resources for their academic purposes. The gap between the teachers and students was another reason to the students in utilising the library and its facilities and teachers could have been played an important role by giving some academic assignments, as result of this library could have been used for a good extent, through which their knowledge and experience could be developed.

Teachers who engage in teaching the distance learners should not only rely on mere ready materials instead they should integrate search based information in their pedagogy and give confidence to the students to carry out and explore information sources in their academic activity. As a result of this it forces them to get on freedom of learning and study makes them exploratory. The researcher also found that most of the distance students prefer to get photocopy of the materials they found in the University library due to lack of sufficient resources in the University library that could not provide adequate information access to the facilities in a way and quantify suitable and satisfactory to distance students in contrast with what they want and expected from the library. The library management should take care off and construct information services to provide its resources which are reliable and best means to bridge the gap of information resources.

Students support services like access to libraries and information systems and offering its information resources is vey much essential to the distance learners which sould be foremost priority by the providers of distance learning courses.

It is also advisable to any institutions offering distance education that it should have a planned orientation or information literacy programme to its learners in order to facilitate the education with ease. University management ought to attempt to put into practice wide-range of information literacy programmes to prevail over the challenge of awareness of library services.

This would be the moral responsibility of all the distance learning universities to equip distance students for lifelong learning and to prepare them to access the all the available resources, so as the information resources are fully utilized. On the whole creating awareness programmes have a significant positive use and accessibility of the library resources.

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